

REMARKS

Claims 1-23, 25-26 and 28-33 are currently pending in this application, with claims 1, 11, 30, and 31 being independent. Applicants have amended claims 1, 2, 11, 12, 25, 26, 28, and 29 to better define the present invention. Claim 23 has been amended to address a statutory subject matter rejection. Claims 30-33 have been added to define additional aspects of the invention. Claims 24 and 27 have been cancelled without prejudice and disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration in light of the amendments and remarks presented herein, and earnestly seek timely allowance of the pending claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §101

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 23 under 35 USC §101 as allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Specifically, the Examiner asserted that the limitation “a computer program for carrying out the method...” is non-statutory. While Applicants do not acquiesce to the rejection, claim 23 has been amended to advance the prosecution of the application. Applicants therefore respectfully request the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-9, 11-17, and 24-29 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 5,675,672 to Nakabyashi (“Nakabyashi”). Applicants submit the Examiner has failed to establish an *prima facie* case of anticipation and respectfully traverse this rejection.

Nakabyashi merely discloses a two-dimensional coded character string linker for eliminating duplications when first and second two-dimensional coded character string files partially overlap each other by automatically deleting the duplicated coded character data from one file and linking the two-dimensional coded character string files together (abstract).

Specifically, Nakabyashi discloses processing coded characters 48 generated from optical character recognition unit 12 from either a first scan 28 or a second scan 30, which are stored in a first memory 14 or second memory 16, respectively. Nakabyashi further discloses that the optical character recognition unit 12 cuts out a circumscribed outline or border about each character found in block 34 by using character segmenting. Once this circumscribed border has been determined for each character, a normalization of each circumscribed border is performed by a standardization process, which essentially centers each character within an outer border based on the circumscribed outline or border of each character (see col. 3, line 62, through col. 4, line 20; Fig. 2). In order to determine redundancies within each of the two files, Nakabyashi scans each row of the two files and compares, character by character, the coded characters in one file with the coded characters of another. (See col. 5, lines 33-44.) The process continues for each row within a file to check for a match of coded characters. (See col. 5, lines 45-60; Fig. 3).

However, Nakabyashi fails to disclose, at least, “a processing device for converting coherent pieces of the information in the images to a coded representation of the extent of the pieces of information in at least one dimension...a comparison device for comparing the extent of the coherent pieces of information for determining an overlap position between the images,” as recited in claim 1, and “converting coherent pieces of the information in the images to a coded representation of the extent of the pieces of information in at least one dimension...comparing

the extent of the coherent pieces of information in the images,” as recited in claim 11.

Nakabyashi is distinguished by the present invention in that he merely discloses the character-by-character comparison of information found in each file to determine common information shared by the files.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejections of claims 1 and 11. Claims 2-9 and 25-26 depend from claim 1 and are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from allowable claim 1. Claims 12-17 and 28-29 depend from claim 11 and are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from allowable claim 11.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

The Examiner rejected claims 10, 18-19, and 20-22 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabyashi and further in view of US Patent No. 5,220,621 to Saitoh. Applicants submit the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness and respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 10 depends from claim 1 and claims 18-19 and 20-22 depend from claim 11, both of which are allowable over Nakabyashi as presented above in the arguments for the allowability of independent claims 1 and 11.

Saitoh discloses an image character recognition system, which utilizes a generalized hough transformation.

However, Saitoh is silent with respect to the features described above in the arguments for the allowability of claims 1 and 11, these features being incorporated into claims 10, 18, 19, and 20-22 by virtue of their dependency.

Accordingly, claim 10 is allowable at least by virtue of its dependency from independent claim 1, and claims 18-19 and 20-22 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from allowable claim 11.

Conclusion

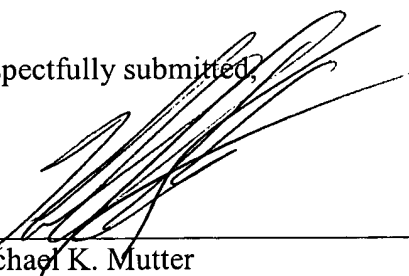
In view of the above amendments and remarks, this application appears to be in condition for allowance and the Examiner is, therefore, requested to reexamine the application and pass the claims to issue.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at telephone number (703) 205-8000, which is located in the Washington, DC area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.


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Respectfully submitted,


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